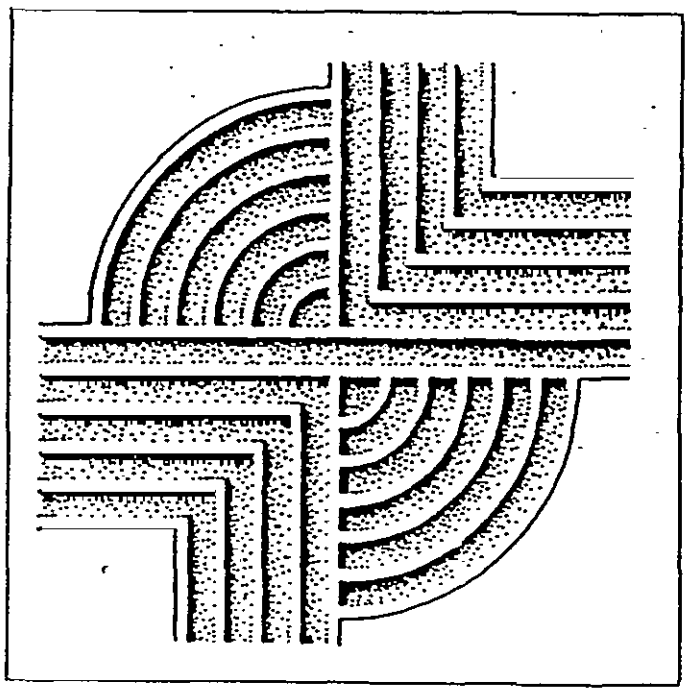
MANAGEMENT SUMMARY OF A RECONNAISSANCE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE HUSBANDS CREEK TRACT, CHERAW, MARLBORO COUNTY, S.C.



RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION 38

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Chicora Research Contribution 38

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August 18, 1989

Introduction

This investigation was conducted by Dr. Michael Trinkley of Chicora Foundation, Inc. for the United States Fish and Wildlife Service under Order Number 42520-9-0195. The Contract Officer was Ms. Patricia Podriznik, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Atlanta, Georgia and the local contact was the Carolina Sandhills National Wildlife Refuge Manager, Mr. Ronald Snider. The survey area, known as the Husbands Creek tract, is situated on the Pee Dee River immediately east of Cheraw, South Carolina, north of U.S. 1/S.C. 9 and south of Husbands Creek (Figure 1).

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposes to create a wetland in the center of the tract, which is currently an agricultural field owned by the Farmers Home Administration, for waterfowl conservation. The work will involve the construction of two low dams across an old drainage which runs north-south through the center of the field. The soil for these dams will be obtained by removing approximately a foot of plow soil from several of the higher elevations in the field adjacent to the slough. The total area of inundation will be about 10 acres, with a depth of about 3 feet. The proposed wetland area will closely follow a relic drainage in the field, visible on the USGS topographic maps as the 80 foot contour.

The proposed work has the potential to damage sites directly through dam construction and field grading activities, and indirectly through inundation with the resulting changes in soil chemistry. Areas of borrow outside the wetland area will continue to be plowed, resulting in the creation of a new plowzone.

Chicora Foundation was verbally contacted by the Atlanta office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on August 1 and asked to prepare a cost estimate for a reconnaissance survey. During our preliminary background check, we discovered that an archaeological site was recorded in the project area by the Research Laboratories of Anthropology. This information was relayed to the Fish and Wildlife Service. On August 7, 1989 Chicora was verbally requested to perform a reconnaissance survey of the inundation area (to include the dams and adjacent borrow areas, but excluding the remainder of the field). This was followed by a purchase order, dated August 14, 1989.

This study, therefore, involves only a small portion of the Husband's Creek tract and is at a reconnaissance survey level. It is our understanding the National Park Service archaeologists will be responsible for the eventual intensive survey of the

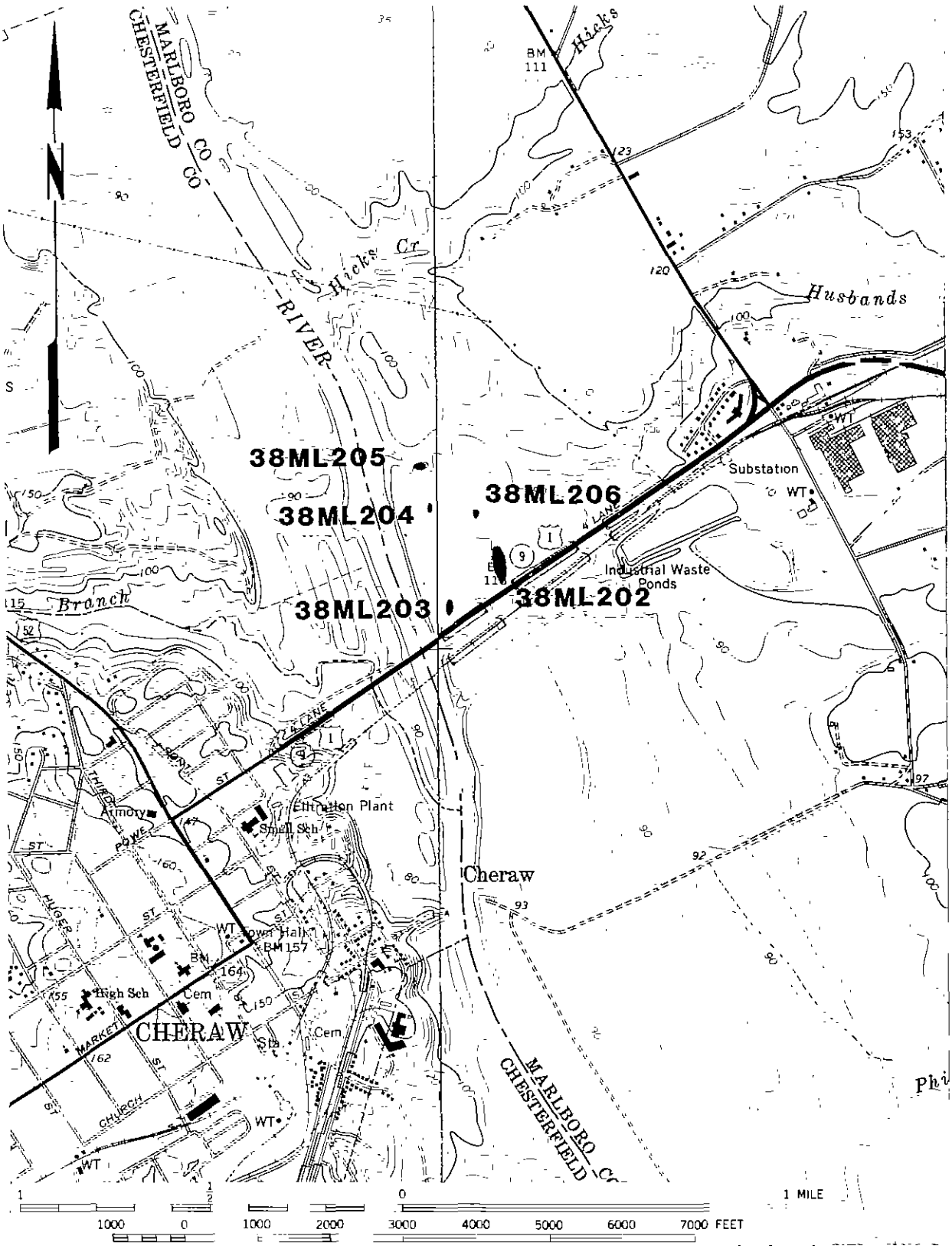

Figure 1. Portions of the Cheraw and Wallace USGS maps showing the project area and recorded archaeological sites.

field. Based on discussions with Ms. Podriznik and Mr. Snider, it was determined that the field survey could be accomplished in one person day, with an additional one person day to complete the necessary site forms, catalog recovered material, and prepare a management summary report. No background research, other than an examination of the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology and the Research Laboratories of Anthropology (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) site files, was conducted for this project.

The recovered materials will be curated by the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology under the various site number designations. Site forms have been provided to that agency, as well as the State Historic Preservation Office.

Effective Environment

Marlboro County is situated in the Atlantic Coastal Plain of South Carolina and is located in the northeastern part of the state. It is bordered to the north and northeast by North Carolina, to the southeast by Dillon County, and to the west and southwest by the Pee Dee River. The drainage in the county is dominated by the southerly flowing Pee Dee River and the numerous smaller creeks flowing southwesterly into the Pee Dee. Elevations range from about 70 to 300 feet mean sea level (MSL) since the county extends across four marine terraces.

Topography ranges from nearly level along the Pee Dee floodplain to moderately steeply sloping adjacent to the creek drainages. The Sand Hills, which are the highest portion of the county, have variable topography, streams with steep gradients and generally wide valleys. Below the Sand Hills are the nearly level to gently sloping uplands which have been dissected by several sluggish, meandering streams. These drainages tend to be relatively narrow. On the Pee Dee floodplains, which range from less than a mile to several miles in width, drainage is characterized by sluggish, intermittent sloughs. Also characteristic of Marlboro County are numerous, scattered low depressions, known as Carolina Bays (Craft 1962:104).

The soils in Marlboro County have been generally classified as either Norfolk sands or belonging to the Norfork-Ruston Association (United States Department of Agriculture 1939). These soils have been derived from unconsolidated beds of sands, sandy clays, and clays, or from old marine deposits. While refinements have been made in the soil classifications this generalized description is still accurate. The Pee Dee floodplain belongs to the Wehadkee-Congaree-Chewacla soil association and is characterized by nearly level alluvial soils (Craft 1962). These soils are influenced by flooding and their generally low elevations. Large magnitude floods have occurred on the Pee Dee

in 1908, 1928, 1929, 1936, and 1945. The 1945 flood reached a stage of 107.3 feet which was the largest flood recorded, exceeding the 100-year level.

The upland areas of Marlboro County have an Oak-Hickory-Pine potential natural vegetation characterized by medium tall to tall forests of broadleaf deciduous and needleleaf evergreen trees. The floodplain, however, is part of the Southern Floodplain Forest, which is dominated by medium tall to tall forests of broadleaf deciduous and evergreen tress. The dominants are tupelo, oak, and in very wet areas, bald cypress (Kuckler 1964).

Additional information on the environment of the project area may be obtained from United States Department of Agriculture (1980) and Michie (1980).

The project area consists of a floodplain field immediately north of the U.S. 1/S.C. 9 bridge, bordered to the west by the Pee Dee and to the north by Husbands Creek. The topography is generally level with several low floodplain terraces. A relic drainage, to be flooded by the proposed project, runs north-south through the center of the field. Cultivation practices have used this drainage, originally little more than a slough, to drain the field. Soils in the field are Congaree fine sandy loams, which are well drained and characteristic of the Pee Dee floodplain. The slough consists of somewhat poorly drained Chewacla silt loams (Craft 1962:Map 19, 13-14). Elevations, based on the U.S.G.S. Cheraw and Wallace 7.5' topographic maps, range from about 80 to 90 feet MSL. Vegetation consists of a fringe of hardwoods on a levee adjacent to the Pee Dee River and to the north adjacent to Husbands Creek. To the east of the project site there is a backwater slough associated with Husbands Creek which is dominated by standing water and a true floodplain forest.

The field has been cultivated for a number of years and recently has been used for planting soybeans. At the time of the survey the field was disked with a very light cover of weedy vegetation.

Background Research

There are few published archaeological investigations for this area of South Carolina. Michie (1980) produced a preliminary planning guide for the Yadkin-Pee Dee River Basin, which provides some general environmental and archaeological background research. Published reports of direct relevance include the S.C. 151 survey from Pageland to Hartsville (Cable et al. n.d.), a survey of the Whites Creek drainage (Ward 1978), and a brief excavation at a site immediately to the north of the project tract (Hogue and Trinkley 1978). This latter project is

of particular interest because of its proximity to the survey tract and the recovery of two late Pee Dee burials. This site has also produced small quantities of protohistoric Catawba series pottery.

In addition, the Research Laboratories of Anthropology at the University of North Carolina has conducted a number of brief archaeological surveys along the Pee Dee River, recording a number of floodplain sites. This work, spanning a twenty year period has been directed toward identifying a Sara village known to have been located in the vicinity of Cheraw, South Carolina (see Wilson 1984, 1985 for additional information). As a result of this previous work several sites have been tested and a significant quantity of surface materials have been collected at Chapel Hill.

This project included a review of the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology state site files, as well as an examination of South Carolina archaeological sites recorded at the Research Laboratories of Anthropology (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill). This review revealed that one archaeological site, SoCv513, was recorded in the agricultural field in 1980. This site, visited during a period of heavy soybean growth, produced only a small quantity of material and was tentatively attributed to the Pee Dee phase (ca. A.D. 1200).

Field Methods

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services specified a reconnaissance level archaeological survey be conducted in the area of direct project impact, specifically the dam sites, the borrow areas, and the area to be inundated. It was estimated that this survey would cover an area of about 10 acres, most of which was relatively low and thought to have a low potential for the recovery of archaeological sites. Additional survey would be conducted in the remainder of the field by National Park Service archaeologists at some future date. Chicora Foundation agreed to these provisions and the archaeological survey was conducted by the author on August 14. A total of one person day was devoted to the project.

Besides the verbal project description, we received an unscaled aerial photograph with the approximate locations of the dams, borrow areas, and flood zone indicated. Upon arriving in the field, the dam locations had been flagged on the ground, but the borrow areas were too generalized to allow flagging. The locations of the dams provided some indication of the area to be flooded.

Reconnaissance surveys are generally recognized as covering limited geographic areas and are developed according to professional judgement regarding the possible location of

cultural sites (taking into consideration such factors as topography, soils, hydrology, and so forth). Such studies are primarily useful for providing a basis upon which more intensive surveys may be based and they are not consistently acceptable for compliance projects.

As a consequence, the intensity of this investigation was increased to ensure adequate coverage of the project area. This was achieved by walking the periphery of the proposed impoundment area and examining the surface for indications of archaeological remains. In addition, all adjacent ridges or elevational spots (both within the impoundment and on its exterior edge) were walked at 50 foot transects. This resulted in the coverage of an area about 20 acres in size.

When an archaeological site was encountered additional transects were walked in order to determine boundaries and provide a larger, more representative collection of cultural remains. Information necessary to complete South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology site forms was gathered at this time. The collection at each site was systematic in that transects were routinely examined, but the collection from each sites must be considered a "grab sample" since all items were not collected. Because this was intended to be a reconnaissance level investigation, no intensive subsurface investigations were conducted (although the soil profile of one site was examined through a screened shovel test). In general, subsurface tests were not warranted on this tract because of the excellent surface visibility and recent rainfall.

Laboratory Analysis

The cleaning, cataloging, and analysis of artifacts was conducted at the Chicora Foundation laboratory in Columbia on August 15, 1983. The collections will be curated under their individual site numbers at the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology using the format established by that institution. All artifacts were evaluated for their conservation needs; all were judged to be stable and to require no treatments at this time.

Analysis of the collections followed professionally accepted standards with a level of intensity suitable to the quantity and quality of the remains. Prehistoric ceramics were classified using common South Carolina types (e.g., Trinkley 1983), while lithics were examined in reference to the research by Coe (1964).

Results

The excellent surface visibility coupled with the intensive surface survey of the project area resulted in the identification of five archaeological sites. All of these sites produced

evidence of prehistoric occupation; no indication of historic period sites was found. These sites were found on the higher sand ridges in the field on the periphery of the drainage slough. All but one of the sites appears to be outside the zone of direct impact.

Site 38ML202 is situated on a second terrace in the field immediately to the east of the proposed impoundment. The central UTM coordinates are E603240 N3841400. Based on the distribution of surface material the site is estimated to cover an area measuring 450 feet north-south by 150 feet east-west. The soils are the relatively well drained Congaree series and the plowzone was found to be approximately one foot in depth. The site is elevated about 3 to 4 feet above the surrounding field. The lower elevations of this site will be inundated and this will probably cause significant changes in soil chemistry.

Recovered materials, representing a grab collection, include 30 rhyolitic flakes (both primary and secondary), three rhyolitic core fragments, one core fragment of an unidentified lithic material, one quartzite flake fragment, one quartz hammerstone fragment, one quartz cobble fragment, and one rhyolitic projectile point base (tentatively identified as a Guilford Lanceolate (Coe 1964:43).

This site appears to represent a small camp where both primary core reduction and secondary flaking activities were conducted. The presence of a heat cracked quartz cobble suggests the possibility of more generalize activity at the site. The single diagnostic specimen suggests a Middle Archaic period date of about 4000 B.C.

Site 38ML203 is found on the opposite side of the drainage from 38ML202 and the central UTM coordinates are E603000 N3841250. This site, which based on the surface survey measures 200 feet north-south by 100 feet east-west, was originally identified by the Research Laboratories of Anthropology survey as SoC^{v}513. Material is found sparsely scattered along a narrow terrace between the Pee Dee River to the west and the drainage slough to the east. The area is characterized by Congaree soils and the site is elevated about 2 feet above the surrounding field.

Materials recovered from the grab collection include three rhyolitic flakes, two Pee Dee Complicated Stamped sherds, one Pee Dee Check Stamped sherd, seven probable Pee Dee Plain and/or eroded sherds, and one Catawba sherd. The Pee Dee materials have been typed by Reid (1967) while the Catawba pottery was originally typed as the Kimbel Series by Trinkley et al. (1983).

This site appears to represent perhaps a single small homestead occupied during the Pee Dee phase (ca. A.D. 1200). The

Catawba sherd suggests some protohistoric to historic occupation (ca. A.D. 1500-1600), although site utilization during this late period was not intensive.

Site 38ML204 is situated about 1500 feet north of 38ML203 on a small ridge to the west of the drainage slough. Although the soils in this area are also Congaree fine sand loams, there is a large quantity of naturally occurring quartz cobbles. The central UTM coordinates are E602950 N3841660 and the site measures about 120 feet in diameter. This small ridge is about 2 feet above the surrounding field and may be an extension of the ridge on which 38ML203 is situated.

Artifact recovery at this site was very difficult because of the large quantity of naturally occurring rock in the soil. Materials collected include only one quartz flake and two rhyolitic flakes.

Given the sparse recovery of cultural remains it is difficult to assess the function of this site. The absence of ceramics suggests that the site dates from the Archaic period (ca. 8000 to 1000 B.C.).

Site 38ML205 is situated at the head of the drainage slough on a pronounced rise immediately adjacent to Husbands Creek. There is a bulldozer cut from the field down to the creek. The central UTM coordinates are E602900 N3841850 and Congaree series are present in the area. Based on the distribution of surface material this site is estimated to cover an area 75 feet north-south by 50 feet east-west.

Artifact density at this site, in spite of its seemingly excellent location, is very low. Recovered materials include three rhyolitic flakes and one Pee Dee Complicated Stamped sherd. These remains suggest a site dating about A.D. 1200, although an Archaic component cannot be ruled out.

Site 38ML205 is situated on the east side of the drainage slough about 1000 feet north of 38ML202. Both sites are on the same ridge which parallels the slough, although artifact distribution is clearly discontinuous. The soils are classified as the Congaree Series and the site is about 3 feet above the surrounding field. The thin surface scatter suggests site dimensions of 50 by 50 feet. The central UTM coordinates are E603130 N3841650.

Recovered materials are sparse and include one used quartz cobble fragment, one rhyolitic flake, and one unidentifiable sherd (probably Middle Woodland, ca. A.D. 1000). The low density of remains and the poor condition of the single sherd recovered, make it impossible to place this site within a firmer context.

Site Significance and Recommendations

It is generally accepted that "the significance of an archaeological site is based on the potential of the site to contribute to the scientific or humanistic understanding of the past" (Bense et al. 1986:60). If a site exhibits integrity it is likely that it may address at least some research questions and contribute information, but to be eligible the contribution must be significant.

Sites 38ML204, 38ML205, and 38ML206 have a low density of artifacts, poor artifact quality and variability, and probably lack site integrity based on the extensive plowing history of this field. They are recommended as not eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.

Site 38ML203 is likewise heavily plowed, has a limited range of artifacts and a very low density of remains. The presence of the one Catawba sherd is interesting, but it appears to be common in this area to identity Pee Dee sites which have a small quantity of later protohistoric material. This site does not have either the size or the density of remains to suggest that it is a significant protohistoric Siouan occupation. The Pee Dee remains probably represent a small nucleated homestead, or may even represent a temporary extractive camp. While this information is important for settlement studies in the area, it is unlikely that the site maintains sufficient integrity to warrant eligibility. As a result, this site is recommended to be not eligible for inclusion on the National Register.

The final site, 38ML202, is the largest site identified by this survey and it appears to date from the Archaic period. Unfortunately, the remains appear to be present only in the plowzone (based on a single shovel test to examine the soil profile). The location of this site and the extensive plowing make it unlikely that site integrity is high. As a result, this site is recommended as not eligible for inclusion on the National Register.

Of the five sites identified, only one (38ML202) appears to be within the zone of direct construction impact, and only a portion of this site will be flooded by the impoundment. The remaining sites will continue to suffer agricultural damage, but will not be directly affected by the proposed inundation. No further work is recommended for any of the five sites identified during this survey.

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